



# TUZLA: THE FORGOTTEN AIRFIELD COMM AIRMEN MAINTAIN CONTACT

**By Master Sgt. Chance Babin**

401st Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

**TUZLA AIR BASE, Bosnia and Herzegovina** — In the late 1990s, Tuzla Air Base was crawling with thousands of Airmen who helped maintain the base and airfield.

But now, airfield maintenance has moved into the hands of just 160 contractors, yet the Air Force still has a small presence here. Two of those Airmen are communicators deployed here from the 401st Air Expeditionary Wing at Aviano Air Base, Italy.

“Navigation aids and radio are essential to the mission, so it’s critical to get good support from contractors and blue suiters,” said Lt. Col. David Lowe, commander of Det. 1, 401st AEW. “Our job is to provide a safe and operable airfield for both NATO and EUFOR (European Forces).”

Staff Sgt. Mark Beecroft, a radio certifier, said not having the radio certified can hinder the mission, so it’s imperative that radios are kept current with certifications.

“I have to have good communications and coordination with the contractors. They’re the liaison between me and the air traffic controllers when performing certification,” he said.

Staff Sgt. Mario Morris, a meteorological and navigational systems certifier, said he was surprised to see so many contractors on base, but that he recognized some of them from his military days. He said they all work as a team to keep Tuzla’s airfields operational.

**1990s: LED BY NATO**



**NOW: LED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION**

## **EUFOR'S STABILIZATION FORCE MISSION FOCUS**

- ▶ To maintain a safe and secure environment.
- ▶ To support the international community in the performance of its mandates in the Multi-Year Road Map (the MYRM is a means of measuring progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina).
- ▶ To continue to train and restructure the armed forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- ▶ To respond immediately to counter anti-Dayton non-compliant groups and institutions.
- ▶ To provide flexible military presence focused on critical areas.



**Staff Sgt. Mario Morris** inspects the harness of an antenna cable system for corrosion.



Photos by Master Sgt. Chance Babin

**Staff Sgt. Mark Beecroft** aligns a telephone card while performing an annual certification on Air Traffic Control and Landing Systems.